

Send a Message

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Summary: The once brilliant warrior, Valhallarama is reduced to bedrest during her pregnancy. When she and Stoick have a heated argument, the consequences are fatal.

1. Chapter 1

**I apologise for the crappy Scottish dialect. All I did was watch Craig Ferguson's show on Youtube and clips of Billy Connolly's stand-up, so it was a bit hard to spell out the sounds. Lol. **

Send a Message

In the heat of his anger and horror, Stoick had stormed out in the wee hours of the morning. His mind in a fog, he somehow believed that would erase the memory of what he'd just witnessed. He now had perched on his knees on the edge of the shore, gazing out to sea. The sun not yet awake from its slumber, Stoick was left alone in his heartbreak, his entire body trembling in shock. He breathed heavily in order to compose himself, but he didn't want to be calm. Deep inside, he was raging and screaming, being engulfed by his grief. As he looked towards the blue horizon, the salt in the water dancing around him in the blustery winds, he felt her firm yet kind voice already starting to fade. The image of her crooked smile also began to dissolve to nothing but a distant, unreachable dream. And only a few hours ago, she was alive; perfectly well; perfectly healthy. Stoick repositioned himself, the urge to weep battling through, and his broad, mountainous shoulders shook violently. His wife, the one woman he'd ever truly loved, was dead. The tears streaming down his face gave him a feeling of fire burning his skin. His mighty howl was like that of a wolf. Stoick was not ashamed to cry now.

Gobber stood quite and still in the darkness of the morning air. He was only at the top of the harbour, watching out for his best friend, but he wasn't sure if he'd been discovered yet. The disabled blacksmith heaved a deep, inaudible sigh full of heartache for the

chief. In all the twenty eight years he'd known Stoick, he had never seen the man cry. The bundle in his muscle-bound, hairy arms wriggled and squeaked. Almost heartbroken, Gobber gazed down at the face of the tiny baby boy. As if it was his own child, Gobber tenderly readjusted the woollen blanket he was wrapped in. The poor bairn was shivering slightly in the cold spring air. Even though he was a little hesitant to, Gobber decided to make his presence known. With a distinctive hobble, he stepped closer to Stoick. Before he got the chance to speak, the baby let out a little gurgly whine. Stoick whirled around, starting slightly. When he noticed the infant, his eyes immediately narrowed in pure rage. His face was soaked in tears.

" What are ye doing 'ere?" the chief ordered in a slow, rumbling snarl.

" This kid 'ere is yer son. I know Val would want 'im tae be with 'is dad," Gobber replied in a mumble. He didn't really know what to do with himself. He'd never felt this awkward around Stoick before.

Stoick scoffed. He rose to his feet, making himself look bigger than he actually was. " My son? Ye think thatâ€¢_creature _is my son? No son of mine would kill his mother."

The large man growled again in disgust at the sight of the pathetic little boy. He brought his shoulders down and straightened his spine. He then became to walk away to mope in solitude. But for Gobber, it was a terrible sight to see. Yes, Stoick was allowed to grieve, but he was giving up the fight before it had even begun. Vikings were better than that, and Gobber was disgusted that Stoick was going against all his principles.

" She went on 'er own terms, Stoick," he said. He skipped a few paces to catch up with his friend. " She bled so muchâ€¢" He trailed off and swallowed hard, suddenly overcome with emotion. " There was nothin' I could do, Stoick," he went on, shakily. " Ye know that."

Stoick stopped in his tracks, his shoulders back, his head slightly raised. He turned slowly and leant forward, almost pressing his bearded face against Gobber's. With an animalistic scowl, he muttered, " Prove it."

2. Chapter 2

The evening was as cold as the icy deserts of Antarctica but alive as a beating heart. The raucous drunken sounds of the pub-dwellers were carried by the harsh, biting wind and were brought to the ears of everyone in the mountaintop village â€" including their scolding spouses. The women wandered around in packs as the Viking women often did when they weren't attending to their daily duties. They undoubtedly chatted and gossiped about something juicy as they carried giant heaps of armour or weaponry to Gobber's shop to be sharpened or buffed up. A lone shepherd was searching high and low for a sheep that must've gotten loose again. The guards who were on lookout for dragons all slumbered deeply at their posts, still standing up with their weapons pose to attack. To Valhallarama, who lay wide awake, hot and restless in bed, it was a world that she

desperately missed. Due to her recent ill-health in pregnancy, she had been advised by her midwife not to participate in any battles. Val thought this was complete hogwash, of course, as she believed that an expectant mother should partake in such events in order to influence her unborn child to do the same. It'd been that way for centuries. But she humoured the midwife anyway, not letting anyone in on her secret wish to one day sneak out to kill a dragon.

The young woman sighed. As the atmospheric noise of Berk continued, Val felt bored. Most of her days seemed to be filled with dreaded rest and tranquillity. Her mind screamed at her to get up and do something â€“ even if it was just to dust the kitchen floor. And being so sick of her situation, she thought it would be stupid not to obey. She kicked the blankets off of her ever-growing torso and slowly pulled herself upright with some difficulty. Her heart pounding in her eyes from the mild exercise, she carefully went down the wooden steps as they creaked noisily under her great weight. Then when she got her breath back, she rushed to the nearest window. There must be someone worth talking to passing by. After all, her four female companions had promised to pop by.

" Hi, Mrs. Stoick!" Haggis the Pervert hollered in a drunken slur. " How're ye doin'?"

Valhallarama glowered disapprovingly at him, her thick, freckly arms firmly folded. Her sea-green eyes were gleaming furiously like a fire in her anger. Stoick had warned him about leering at his wife more times than he could count. But as Haggis blundered on to harass yet another poor woman, who was passing swiftly in the opposite direction, her scowl melted into a wide toothy grin. The vast, dark figure of the chief was trudging closer. He was hunched over and he walked slower than usual â€“ a sure sign that he was not happy.

" Stoick!" she screamed ecstatically.

In nothing but her ill-fitting white fleece nightgown, she dashed to meet her husband at the front door. In her excitement, she nearly tore the door off its hinges. She had her arms wide open for a hug, but he didn't give that bone-crushing squeeze like he usually did. On his face, beneath all of that messy red facial hair, he wore a frustrated frown, grumbling furiously under his breath. Val instantly knew that someone had disappointed him again.

" What's the matter, darling?" she asked worriedly.

Stoick exhaled sharply. " Brutus and Brainsneeze and that lot were asleep at their posts again," he announced heatedly. " I've 'ad it up tae 'ere with 'em!" he barked. " I swear if they do somethin' like this again, they're out on their ear!"

Val watched and listened intently, her eyes following his every movement around the room. She didn't dare say a word, for she pitied for those boys.

" Them idiots barely passed their dragon training! I don't know why I even 'ired 'em in the first place!" he continued to rant. " What if there was an attack tonight? And they weren't awake to light the signals?"

" They're just kids, Stoick," Val answered timidly.

Stoick scoffed. " They shoulda learnt by now! Them bein' kids don't 'ave anythin' tae do with it!" After a brief pause, he realised something. " What're ye doin' up anyway? Midwife Warthoggler said tae get plenty o' rest."

Val rolled her eyes, heaving a sigh. " I'm bored, Stoick. I want tae get away from 'ere! I want _us tae get away!"

" I don't 'ave time right now," Stoick admitted through an exhausted sigh. " I 'ave tae go tae the forge an' sort this bleedin' mess out. Then I 'ave tae audition new recruits in the morning. It'll be a long while until we go away."

As Stoick went to sit down on the sofa with his head in his hands, Val's red-auburn eyebrows immediately shot downward in disappointment. But she wasn't going to take no for an answer. " Please, Stoick! Please! I want us tae go tae the mountains! Like we used tae! Remember? Remember the time we got caught in the avalanche?"

Stoick moaned. " Yes, of course, I remember, but I can't, Iâ€!" He paused and then, he turned to her and said, " We'll go once the baby is born. All right?"

Val clucked her tongue. " Then just leave my brother in charge! I'm desperate tae get away from this Thor-forsaken place! I'll go crazy if I don't!"

Stoick rolled his eyes. He was not in the mood for an argument. At times, it seemed as though his brain could only focus on one thing, and that was the safety of this village. The one thing he thought would work was to put her mind at rest. " I trust Spitelout like 'e was me own brother, but it's a huge responsibility. I can't just give it tae anyone. People's lives are at stake, including yours." He placed a loving, protective hand on the round curve in his wife's belly. A foot or a hand nudged softly against his fingers.

She pushed him away angrily with a soft grunt. The heartbreak and disappointment set her fragile heart racing, pumping her temper throughout her entire being itself. " I can't take it any more, Stoick! What more do I 'ave tae say? I am sick an' tired o' this! You know I am honoured ye married me and that I'm carryin' yer child gives me pride like nothin' else in this world! But what I can't stand is watchin' ev'rybody else fight dragons and go aboot their business as usual while I'm stuck indoors restin' all the time. It's drivin' me mad! If I don't get away, I'm gonna somethin' drastic and I don't know what that it is! Yer know it wouldn't do me any good! Please, Stoick, I'm beggin' ye."

The Viking chief snarled at her like a rabid dog, arising from his seat on the sofa. He towered over her, casting a long dark shadow in the fire-lit room. " Ye should know the responsibility of takin' care o' this village," he growled.

" Ye promised yer'd put me first! Or 'ave ye forgotten that?" Val protested.

His chest puffed out in fury, Stoick's rage was almost to boiling point. He curled his boulder-like hands into fists, his arms

trembling in anger. " Why are ye so adamant aboot goin' anyway? The village _needs_ me, Val! Wi'out me, this bleedin' village would be in shambles!"

Val was ready to snap. " BECAUSE I NEED A BREAK!" she screamed at the very top of her lungs. " I am sick and tired o' bein' this weak, wee little _nothing_â€|that needs protectin' all the time." She let out a gentle breath, the urge of weeping not far behind. If her body allowed it, she would've been on her knees. " Please, Stoick," she begged tearfully.

Stoick subtly massaged his temple, where a headache came on hard and strong. " I'm not listenin' to this anymore!" he muttered. He turned to leave the house, but Val felt the need to stop him once again.

" Where're ye goin'? Don't go! Please, talk tae me!" she pleaded.

Stoick shoved her off him, facing her with the fury in his burning eyes. " Go away!" he bellowed. " I don't need ye!"

Val's heart couldn't take any more and she began screaming and yelling. " I can't believe ye! Yer despicable!" she shouted. " I HATE YOU!" she finally screeched. She struck her husband hard across the face.

Stoick raged and roared. Seconds later, he automatically flung his fist forward into Val's stomach, yelling, " DON'T HIT ME!"

The mighty force of Stoick's punch pushed violently Val back onto the hard stone floor, where she landed with a painful thud. The chief breathed heavily and trembled, and thundered out. He slammed the door hard behind him, unknowingly leaving Val to wallow in her pain. At first, she didn't realise it, but as the seconds rolled into minutes, the sharp, agonising pain in her back took its toll. This was when she realised that something was deadly wrong. She kept her left hand firmly on her belly and she leant forward to feel between her legs with her other hand. She let out a horrified gasp. It felt damp. Then she looked. Spots of blood sat dripping on each finger. Shuddering with fear, she stifled a sob. Panic hit her like a wave crashing against the rocks. She couldn't allow herself to have her baby now, all alone with nothing but the sounds outside. She had to get to someplace safe, and after only a second of thought, she came upon the answer. Still shaking violently, she forced her body to pick itself up. Sudden excruciating pains caused her to teeter backwards a little. She gripped on to the dinner table, waiting for it to pass. She heaved a mighty groan, her fingers digging harder into the wood as the agony overwhelmed her. She clamped her eyes shut for a moment to block out the outside world. She exhaled gently, and the pain ended for only a few minutes. With small, faltering steps, she slowly made her way to Gobber's shop, her heart missing beats as she urged herself on. Besides Stoick, Gobber had been her most trusted friend since she was a very small girl. There wasn't anyone else she'd rather be comforted by in times of turmoil. Her fat, dirty hand trembled as the chieftess rapped urgently on his door.

When Gobber came to answer, he was covered in soot and sweat and he looked as exhausted as Stoick did. But that didn't seem to matter because his entire face lit up when he saw her.

" Why, Val! What a lovely surprise!" he boomed cheerfully. " I was just thinkin' aboot ye actually. I wanted tae ask ye ifâ€œ!"

Val stopped him. Choking on tears, she showed him her blood-stained hands.

Gobber's eyes widened, knowing immediately. " Ohhh-K. Let's bring ye inside." He wrapped a friendly arm around the poor pregnant woman.

The kind old blacksmith sat her down in a big, comfortable armchair in front of the roaring fire. He offered her a pillow and a blanket, which she took appreciatively.

" D'ye wan' me tae get a doctor for ye?" he asked worriedly after watching her suffer a severe bout of contractions.

Val swung her arms around his neck in sudden hysterics. " Stay wi' me! Please don't leave!" she pleaded through her sobs.

Gobber nodded softly, rubbing and patting her back with his one good hand. " At least tell me what 'appened," he said with a sympathetic smile once the lifelong friends had parted.

Val relayed the miserable tale on to him in all its explicit details, expressing her feelings about being cooped up with enthusiastic longing. So in return, Gobber spent most of the night telling amusing stories and jokes in hopes of keeping her mind off her troubles. And even as Berk finally went to bed, Gobber did funny voices through his yawns. He stayed with her through it all; through all the pain of the contractions; through all blood loss. He never dreamt of leaving her side, even if he was not the man she was meant to spend this time with.

" What time is it?" she mumbled wearily several hours later.

She had completely changed positions by this point. It was clear that the baby was not going to hold on for much longer, so Gobber had gently moved her to the floor. She was now being propped up against the chair with the pillow, the blanket draped over her belly. Gobber had placed another blanket between her legs, ready to help her deliver the baby. Gobber looked up, his eyes half-closed.

" I don't know," he muttered. " Should be gettin' light soon, though, I think."

Val made a quiet, tired noise. She had her eyes closed as though she was about to drift off to sleep. She'd rested her head against Gobber's chest some time ago, where she could listen to the faint sound of his heart beating. " Is Stoick 'ome yet?" she asked weakly.

Gobber smiled sadly to himself. That'd been the fiftieth time she'd asked. The loss of blood and the labour pains were finally making her delirious. Gobber was certain that her time was coming, even though he'd tried to convince himself otherwise. But suddenly, her strength returned as another contraction struck her. A knife pressed hard into her skin, a great hand dragging the blade down into her abdomen. She wriggled and writhed, screaming and crying.

" Gobber!" she sobbed. " I-I need tae push!"

" Push then! If ye like yer need tae push, push wi' all yer might!" Gobber cried.

Val nodded, strands of her red-auburn hair clinging to her hot, sweaty face. The next contraction hit her, and she pushed.

" That's it!" Gobber encouraged. " Push an' scream an' yell!"

He tried not to scream and yell himself. Val was hanging on to his broad shoulders with all her might, her nails digging into his skin. She stopped to rest her exhausted body for a moment or two, panting heavily.

" I'm just gonna see how ye doin' down there," Gobber said somewhat nervously. He scooted along the floor until he reached her feet. Rather shakily, he lifted the bloody hem of her nightgown. She was still haemorrhaging badly, fresh puddles of blood being soaked into the blanket. Gobber swallowed heavily, his face turning a pale green. " I dunno what I'm lookin' at, butâ€¦Bairn's comin'. Sooner or later anyway."

The next thirty minutes were filled with intense pushing, hysterical screams and kind-hearted encouragements. But as she continued with this gut-wrenching exercise, Val began to feel her heart get faster, and consequently, weaker. Gobber sat with her, his arm almost trying to shelter her from her agony. As he brushed the hair away from her hot sweaty cheeks, he now understood that he was redundant in this moment in time. The mother's screams and sobs rattled his brain, but he never let go of her untilâ€¦

" I felt it move!" she cried, her words slightly slurred through her pants.

" Right, I'm gonna take another look," Gobber replied briskly.

He changed positions again, but not before whipping the blanket off Val's stomach and tossing it over his shoulder. He sat near her feet and tucked his good leg underneath him. His peg-leg stuck out and caused his thigh to cramp a little. He leant forward and saw that Val was right. The baby's head and shoulders were clearly visible. Another contraction came, and Val pushed harder than ever, her heart thumping. Gobber outstretched his right hand that was trembling in fear that he would have to catch the wee beggar.

Val wrenched her body forward. " Gobber! Aaarrgh! Iâ€¦"

The baby fell neatly into the blacksmith's hand, making him start in surprise. His heart racing, he carefully cut the umbilical cord with his hook, terrified of hurting him. He quickly wrapped the blanket around him, folding a layer away from his tiny mouth. The wee boy, who was a lot smaller than most newborns, didn't make a sound. Gobber panicked, but then, he remembered what Midwife Warthoggler had said at a birthing lesson when he accompanied Val one time. She had said to rub the baby's back. Gobber never had a gentle touch, but he was quick to act nonetheless. Seconds later, a great cry sprung to alive; a sigh of relief on Gobber's part. Almost laughing, he turned his attention on to Val with a broad grin on his face. But he was met by despair. Val had fainted. Her heart had stopped beating. Simple as

that. Gobber swallowed down a lump in his throat. The tears blinding him, he laid her firstborn son on her chest.

" That's yer son, darlin', " he muttered. " 'E looks like ye, " he added miserably with a saddened smile. He lowered his head and he shook it in disbelief. They looked perfect together; the mother and son. Now they were parted forever.

Still loyal to his companion, Gobber laid flat on his back and kept Val's body warm, staying with her for as long as possible. But it wasn't long until he heard scrambling at his door. He shot immediately up, startled. He grabbed the baby from his mother's chest and held him close. Stoick burst in, brandishing a bunch of pathetic-looking wildflowers. His eyes were drained and bloodshot from his sleepless night. His red hair and beard were tousled and tangled.

" Val! " he called enthusiastically, not noticing the mess on the floor. " I knew ye'd be 'ere. I'm sorry, OK? " Then he looked down, where Gobber sat solemnly.

" I'm sorry, Stoick, " he whispered, standing up. " I did all I could, butâ€|The baby's alive." He offered him his son to hold, making Stoick back away in horror.

" Whatâ€|_ 'appened?_" he gasped. " Ye killed 'er! Didn't ye? "

" I didnae! " Gobber promised. " I don't know what 'appened tae 'er. One minute she was doin' OK, the nextâ€|she was like this. I'm sorry, Stoick. "

The tears welled up in Stoick's bluish-grey eyes, but he didn't let them fall. He growled angrily and stormed out.

3. Chapter 3

Stoick's face was wet with tears. " Soâ€|" he mumbled, his voice cracking. " That means it's my faultâ€|It was me who killed 'er. "

Gobber let out a sharp gasp. " No! No, no, no. It was just one o' those things. Ye know? " he mumbled gloomily.

" I 'ave tae get away!" Stoick decided suddenly. The urge to cry struck him again.

Gobber frowned in slight confusion. He knew how much Stoick loved his work. " Where're ye gonna go? " he asked.

Stoick looked in the direction of the mountains, his eyes stinging. " There, " he said, pointing a finger. " Can ye look after the wee one a little while longer? "

" Oh, why, yes, butâ€|Val's family. Yer mother. Ye can't go away without talkin' tae 'em first. "

The chief heaved a sigh. " Yer right. But I can't tell 'emâ€|"

" I'll tell 'em. "

Stoick felt relieved. " Ye would?"

" O' course. Why wouldn't I?"

Stoick smiled in appreciation. He gave his best friend a grateful squeeze of the shoulder.

" Now," Gobber began. " Shall we give 'er a proper send-off?"

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The island was bathed in the eerie dim light of the new morning, the reflections dancing off the surface of the ocean. Stoick held in his protective arms the limp, lifeless body of his wife, still clothed in the bloody nightgown. Her red-auburn hair was in a tangle as it hung loose in a messy plait. Stoick's heartbroken tears soaked his beard as he marched bravely down to the water's edge, where Gobber waited with the newborn. There, bobbing slightly on top of the water was a little boat that had elaborate carvings along the sides. Gobber gave his best friend a supportive squeeze on the shoulder. Stoick smiled appreciatively, and then ushered him to step back a few paces. With a sigh, the chief laid his wife in the boat. She was just sleeping, it seemed. He then took the lit torch that Gobber had left there and he set the boat alight. And with a sniff, he pushed it out further to sea. Soon, the entire boat was burning, the flames growing higher and higher to Valhalla.

" Ye can 'ave 'er back now. I've 'ad 'er too long," he whispered hoarsely, choking on each word.

" Stoick," Gobber said mournfully. Stoick turned his head. " She was so brave in 'er last hours. Ye woulda bin proud." Stoick focused on the boat again, contemplating over his friend's kind, comforting words. Gobber glanced at the baby, a small smile forming on his mouth. " Odin only gives that power tae 'is angelsâ€|An' ye married one o' them."

End
file.